

ever, a large league of neutrals, especially if headed by the United States, might bring to bear upon Germany moral pressure sufficient to make her realize the futility of continuing a struggle that could certainly never lead to a realization of her ambitions."

To this Roosevelt replied:

"How I wish I were President at this moment! That won't strike you, I know, as an expression of personal ambition. I would be quite willing to accept the Presidency now with a guaranty of being removed from it at the very instant I had succeeded in doing what I had started out to accomplish; and the first thing I would like to do, aside from the subordinate incident of aiding civilization and decency in Mexico, would be to interfere in the world war on the side of justice and honesty, by exactly such a league as you mention. I do not believe in neutrality between right and wrong. I believe in justice.

"When I had the great pleasure and honor of being associated with you and other men whom I highly regarded in the effort to bring about peace between Russia and Japan, I could in good faith act as a neutral. But neutrality in the present war is a crime against humanity and against the future of the race. . . . As you probably know, if I had had the power I would have made this nation actively interfere, if possible at the head of all neutral nations, on the ground of the violation of The Hague Conventions as regards Belgium. I had been preaching preparedness for years; but for the last year I have been earnestly advocat-

ing that we prepare in such fashion as to
make ourselves
able to count decisively if we do have to
interfere.¹

As shown in early chapters of this history,
Theodore
Eoosevelt had been a persistent and earnest
advocate of
national preparedness from the moment of
his entrance
upon public life. Indeed, in the preface to his
history of the
War of 1812, written while he was still a
student in Harvard
University, he had taken his position in favor
of it, and he